

REMARKS

Claims 1-3, 7 and 14 are now pending in the application. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejections in view of the amendments and remarks contained herein.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-3, 11 and 14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Carter et al (U.S. Pat. No. 5,487,535). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 1 and 14 have been amended to recite that the outer ring is fixedly mounted in an essentially cup shaped flange, and the flange is fixedly joined to the vehicle body. This subject matter was previously found in claim 11, which is now cancelled. Furthermore, this amendment is supported at, for example, Figure 1 of the present application where it can be seen that the outer ring 6 is fixedly mounted in an essentially cup shape flange 19 which is fixedly joined to the vehicle body 3. Carter does not anticipate such a structure.

More specifically, Carter fails to teach an outer ring fixedly mounted in an essentially cup shape flange. In contrast, Carter merely teaches hat-shaped upper and lower members 21 and 22 that enclose an inner ring 32. These hat-shaped upper members, however, are not mounted to an outer ring, as claimed. Because Carter fails to teach this aspect of the claimed invention, claims 1 and 14 and each corresponding dependent claim are not anticipated.

Moreover, Applicant notes that because claims 1 and 14 have been amended to include subject matter of claim 11, this amendment should not present a new issue that requires further consideration and/or search. Accordingly, because claims 1 and 14 have been amended to overcome the instant rejection in view of Carter, Applicant respectfully asserts that claims 1 and 14 and each corresponding dependent claim are now in condition for allowance.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claim 3 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Carter et al (U.S. Pat. No. 5,487,535). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 3 is dependent on claim 1, addressed above. Claim 3 is neither anticipated nor obvious for at least the same reasons.

Claim 7 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Carter et al (U.S. Pat. No. 5,487,535) in view of Knable (4,711,463). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 7 is dependent on independent claim 1, addressed above. Claim 7 is neither anticipated nor obvious for at least the same reasons.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

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By: _____

Philip E. Rettig, Reg. No. 34,000
Jason A. Heist, Reg. No. 51,797

HARNESS, DICKEY & PIERCE, P.L.C.
P.O. Box 828
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan 48303
(248) 641-1600

PER/JAH